

# Donna Ockenden

Director General of Health Services and Superintendent of Nursing Services - June 2001.

'It is rare that one has the opportunity to compile a reference for an employee who has contributed so much to the development of a service. Mrs Ockenden was appointed to the post of Head of Midwifery and Gynaecology services inclusive of Neonatal care, within the Governorate of Muscat in June 1999.

Her mandate was to assess the existing services and develop strategies through which the services could advance to meet the growing demands related to National Women's Health Care Standards. This was a formidable task given that little had previously been done to develop the staff or the service. Associated with this responsibility was the urgent need to strengthen the clinical practice areas in order to support the newly introduced Diploma in Midwifery Course. Mrs Ockenden was based in Khola hospital which is a tertiary level centre with approximately 3600 deliveries per annum.

With this post Donna embarked upon an extensive administrative and educational programme. The impact of this programme cannot be overstated and included the increased awareness of staff to the need for lifelong learning. This motivated the staff and generated innovative practice.

The atmosphere within the unit became highly motivated and this had an impact in improving greatly the relationship between nursing service and the medical staff. The result of which has been the enhancement of the status of nurses and midwives. Donna introduced several projects which have had national impact.

The formation of a bereavement group for parents. This was the first of its kind in Oman and has addressed previously ignored needs. The programme has provided support to bereaved families within a multicultural society, the benefits of the programme were presented at a National Women's Conference in Muscat.

Donna's greatest achievement was the introduction of the Fetal Movement Chart. The programme involved the development of the tool, the education of Medical, Nursing and Community educators through a regional training campaign. We are very proud to see that all Omani women are carrying a fetal movement chart with them and using the chart during their clinic visits.

This tool is routinely used in Western healthcare and the reader is requested to appreciate the degree of time and effort required to support the introduction of a bilingual chart into a national setting which was previously unaware of the existence of this procedure.

Donna has developed hitherto non-existent policy and procedure guidelines to address the clinical practice needs within her area. She has also served as a member of the national Midwifery group, which developed national standards of practice.

Donna's contribution to Quality Care has extended beyond the bounds of her unit. She was requested to assess practice throughout the regional women's health services and contributed as a member of the commissioning team for the National Obstetric and Gynaecology Out patient centre which is located in our region. She also conducted workshops on quality for the Nephrology students and worked with a team developing regional documentation standards and training programmes.

To conclude, we would describe Mrs Ockenden as a catalyst of change. Her contribution has insured a safe training ground for the Omani student midwives and provision of safe and effective care for mothers and babies. Her departure will leave a void, which will be impossible to fill.

On behalf of the Ministry of Health we take this opportunity to thank Mrs Ockenden for her extensive contribution to the service and wish her every success in her future endeavours.'

